Dear Howard, 7/20/72

This update is in confidence for reasons I hope will become clear. I welcome disagreement with the reasoning and would prefer to be wrong.

Jim was up yesterday to continue work on the interviews I conducted for the Ray habeas corpus. While we were getting set up for the dubbing I asked him what was new with Cyril. He said Cyril had asked for or had asked for a list of things includes the autopsy tissue slides and related things. He has been told they can't be found. Bob Smith has a notion where they were in 1964-5 or 1966-7, Jim doesn't recall which.

You and I also have a pretty good idea where they were available. I did not volunteer this for two reason: I believe, without checking the file, that you asked this be confidential. I have had a notion that they had to be only one place if not in the hands of the SS, of which there is no record, the other likely source having certified that it held nothing. Assuming, of course, they are not anywhere in the ex. branch, which is the supposed story.

This could very well be Cyril's personal idea. It is pretty obvious. Or, one of the assorted geniuses could have suggested it. However, on the basis of what we know, the best we can expect is to produce what will give the appearance of validating the mythology. It is not a simple matter of looking at the results of the tests made. The beginning point in any rational approach should be what tests were made? We have no reason to believe the important ones were and every reason to believe they were not, for example, no sample from anterior neck margins. Besides, I have learned that bruising can characterize exit and entrance, so unless there is also scorching there is no definitive result in posterior sample. If it confirms Hunt, what have we gained? We also know there was no testing of left brain hemisphere. What good will it do to find there was some of the right, even if it disagrees with what has been said about that? And so forth. So, I'm remaining detached from what superficially might seem like a worthwhile project, remaining convinced the danger of counter-productivity outweights the possible productiveness in new knowledge.

Sometimes my impatience shows and is resented. Let me illustrate a continuing example of the kind of thing that provokes it. Before I left on my exceptionally successful May trip, which began with the understanding that the literary property it produced would be mine and whatever was needed for legal pruposes would be freely available (and I do not expect loterary value but want to preclude possibility of crazy misuse) I told Jim to be ready to make dubs promptly on my return, not only so he could do the necessary work, not only so I could add comment while all was fresh in my mind, but so I could be free of this and do other things without having to try and hold too many things in mind. I told him the model and make of my recorder and told him to get a patchcord that would permit direct dubbing from it to whatever machine he'd use or to my old VOM of he wanted to use that. Naturally, he didn't. They he delayed two months coming up. He brought his or Bud's old Sony, which hasn't always worked, without the electric cord, for a full day's dubbing, and no extra batteries. Naturally, not knowing when his batteries would poop out, I urged using my VOM, which would at least have a constant speed with the electric supply. We didit. I told him if he couldn t find the right cord (He'd brought a wrong one) to take his machine to his dealer and get it. So, became yesterday with a brand new cord-the wronf one. Very wrong-four-hole instead of two!. And we used the old VOM which on one side of one cassette failed to record again, wasting close to an hour. Abd, of course, we couldn't discuss content while dubbing, as we could have with patchcord dubbing. One of the consequences of delaying this part is that much was out of mind until I listened to the tapes for the first time and now we have to set about getting things we could have had two months ago. And Jim is a great guy. Don't misunderstand. But how can one work with any effeciency with others when those who have resources can't do the simplest things?

I haven't filled you in on The Watergate Caper on the assumption you want to spend all your free time on your book and have done no work on the aspects it touches. I don't now say may touch because of a person reason involving Hunt and the probable intrusion by the CIA through him with a deal I had set in 5/65. Best,